

**Testimony
of
Kate Bolduc
Chief Executive Officer
Greater Hartford Arts Council
before the
Appropriations Committee
February 17, 2010**

Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Kate Bolduc and I am the CEO of the Greater Hartford Arts Council.

Clearly we live in very difficult times. Our economy is strained and, as a consequence, state revenues are flat or falling. You, as members of this General Assembly, have to juggle numerous state programs and make very difficult decisions on state's priorities.

By way of background, I spent years in the corporate world as a senior executive of one of this city's Fortune 100 insurance companies. I have lived and thrived through downsizing, corporate restructuring and the shock of mergers. In many ways your jobs are harder, because you cannot walk away from essential services that form the core of our state and society.

I thought long and hard about what I could say about arts funding in this context. My conclusion is that basic arts funding is "smart government" in Connecticut.

"Smart government" in that the state spends about \$30 million a year to fund the Commission on Culture and Tourism and support arts, tourism and heritage programs. This small amount of funding in a \$18 to \$19 billion budget generates over \$3.8 billion in gross state product, produces \$2.6 billion in taxable income and creates more than 27,000 direct jobs and 44,000 jobs attributable to the arts on a statewide basis.

In the Greater Hartford area alone, the arts add \$244 million to our economy, delivers \$23.5 million back in state and local revenue and has created more than 7,400 jobs. Jobs in the arts. Jobs at restaurants. Jobs for carpenters, plumbers and masons. And just as important, the arts are

providing jobs that focus on improving the quality of education for our children, creating integrative medicine platforms that are already transforming the healthcare industry.

I ask you not to look at funding for the arts, tourism and heritage programs as just another line item in the thick budget document. Look at it as a solid, critical investment in Connecticut. It produces financial returns to this state any investment manager would be proud of.

You may have heard this before: "Arts=Jobs." The arts today are both a solid economic engine for Connecticut and a wellspring of innovation and creativity that will feed our future.

Thank you.